

Child Abuse Prevention Month 2024 Proclamation

Whereas we are living in a time when disclosures of sexual abuse and harassment are becoming mainstream, child sexual abuse still lives in secrecy and shame;

and Whereas, children have a right to be safe and to be provided an opportunity to thrive, learn and grow;

and Whereas, child abuse and neglect can be prevented by supporting and strengthening Saline County families, thus preventing the far-reaching effects of maltreatment, providing the opportunity for children to develop healthy, trusting family bonds; and consequently, building the foundations of communities;

and Whereas, by providing safe, stable and nurturing relationships for our children, free of violence, abuse and neglect, we can ensure that Saline County's children will grow to their full potential as the next generation of leaders, helping to secure the future of this state and nation;

and Whereas, there were 1,034 cases of child abuse and neglect investigated by the Department of Children and Families in Saline County in 2023;

and Whereas, Child Advocacy and Parenting Services, Inc., also known as CAPS, provides both prevention and intervention programs designed to reduce risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect while focusing on educating parents and empowering children;

and Whereas, CAPS conducted forensic interviews for 156 child victims of abuse or neglect and/or witnesses to a violent crime in 2023. Those victims also received professional advocacy, a medical exam and care by trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner on the Sexual Assault Response Team, referral to trauma focused mental health services and follow-up supports. These services are delivered through a multi-disciplinary collaboration between City of Salina and Saline County law enforcement, CAPS, Salina Regional Health Center, Department of Children and Families Child Protective Custody, Saline County Attorney's Office, Central Kansas Mental Health Center and private therapists trained to use trauma focused practices;

and Whereas, CAPS began as a child abuse prevention coalition in 1978, the agency has a vision of a place where every child is safe, healthy, and strong. CAPS hopes to SHINE a light on abuse to create awareness and increase support through the following public events:

- ❖ **GO BLUE SALINA – Denim Days** – Businesses encouraging employees to wear blue jeans and/or royal blue can collect funds for CAPS and spread awareness by taking photos of employees showing their blue support! Each participant will get a sticker to wear showing they believe every child should be safe and loved.
- ❖ **SHINE a Light for Survivors** – Citizens are encouraged to turn their porches, lamps or a room in their home blue during the month of April to light the way for child sexual abuse victims and help them SHINE. Blue light bulbs are available for purchase at CAPS.
- ❖ **PINWHEELS FOR PREVENTION CHALLENGE** – A roaming pinwheel garden that is spread via donations from individuals who wish to plant the garden in their yard to show they believe in creating spaces where every child is safe, healthy and strong. Pinwheel planters are available for businesses to rent for their lobbies or windows. Information about the gardens and planters can be found at www.capsosalina.org.

Now Therefore, The Saline County Board of Commissioners, Saline County, Kansas, do hereby proclaim April 2024 as Child Abuse Prevention Month and encourage our citizens to lift up a child's voice.

Joe Hay, Jr., County Commission Chairman

Date

"Improving children's lives and strengthening families through education, family support and advocacy."